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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Letter dated 14 December 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remains volatile as a result of the continued pursuit by Israel, the occupying Power, of illegal, oppressive and destructive policies and measures.

In addition to the malicious, unlawful blockade of the Gaza Strip in collective punishment of the Palestinian civilian population, Israel's rabid and illegal colonization campaign throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues to inflame tensions. This colonization enterprise is being implemented and advanced by the hundreds of thousands of Israeli soldiers and settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Such actions are not only further destabilizing the fragile situation on the ground but are gravely undermining prospects for a resumption of the peace process.

In this regard, I regret to inform you that Israeli settler terror, violence, harassment and intimidation against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has intensified. Vile and destructive acts against Palestinian civilians and their properties have continued. The latest such incident occurred on Friday, 11 December, in the village of Yasouf, near the city of Nablus, where extremist settlers committed arson in a mosque. Settlers entered the village in the pre-dawn hours and set fire to prayer rugs and Korans and other religious books inside the mosque and wrote graffiti on the floor. This provocation led to clashes between Palestinian civilians and the Israeli occupying forces. It has also further stoked religious sensitivities between the two sides, in addition to ongoing acts of provocation by extremist settlers in East Jerusalem, particularly in and around the compound of Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

Such lawlessness and impunity have clearly been fostered and fuelled by the military, financial and physical reinforcements and incentives provided to the settlers by the Israeli Government, including its absolute failure to hold the settlers accountable for their crimes. Extremist settlers have been no doubt further

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emboldened by repeated declarations of support and incitement from members of Israel's current right-wing Government, as well as by Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent announcement of the extension of even more subsidies and privileges for the settlers, thereby facilitating their entrenchment, including in and around Occupied East Jerusalem.

Indeed, while distracting the international community with a so-called "ten-month moratorium" on settlement activities, Israel has in no way ceased its illegal settlement campaign. It has in fact continued to blatantly construct and expand settlements and the Wall, especially in areas in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. The Israeli agenda is clear: to create as many facts on the ground as possible aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Occupied Territory in order to prejudge the outcome of any final peace settlement. Thus, in grave breach of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel continues to colonize the Territory from which it has been repeatedly called upon by the international community to withdraw and to end its occupation of since 1967, in compliance with international law and United Nations resolutions, the very same Territory on which the future independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, is to be established.

Everything that is being done by the occupying Power, in both word and deed, is totally contradictory to that required for ending its occupation and achieving the two-State solution for peace. Israel's vast network of settlement activities is destroying the contiguity, viability, unity and integrity of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and gravely undermining the viability of the two-State solution and precluding a resumption of peace negotiations.

Hundreds upon hundreds of settlement units and structures are being constructed at this very moment in the Palestinian Territory that Israel has belligerently and militarily occupied since 1967. Land confiscations continue and countless illegal measures continue to be undertaken, with the aim of unlawfully seizing more Palestinian land and of depopulating East Jerusalem and its environs in particular of its indigenous Palestinian inhabitants. This has included, inter alia, the continued pursuit of home demolitions and evictions of Palestinian families from the city and permitting settlers to occupy their homes. It has also involved the continued intimidation and arrest of civilians protesting against the occupation's illegal colonization measures, including the recent arrest of Mr. Abdullah Abu Rahmeh, one of the leaders of the non-violent demonstrations held weekly against Israel's confiscation of land and construction of the Wall in the village of Bil'in.

The continuation of all such illegal Israeli actions and provocations will only further ratchet up tensions and cause the further destabilization of an already fragile situation, with far-reaching consequences not only for the prospects of peace but for the region as a whole. It is imperative that the international community, including the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, give due attention to the grave situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that timely measures and action be undertaken to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease forthwith its illegal colonization campaign and all other illegal policies and to instead finally commit to the pursuit of peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 350 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since

28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 23 November 2009 (A/ES-10/470-S/2009/605), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda **Abdelhady-Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.